

# layout for living



no. 24, april 1949

## national conference begins here and now

The Third Annual General Meeting of the Community Planning Association of Canada will be combined with a *National Citizens' Conference on Planning* to be held at the Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg in October 6, 7 and 8, 1949. The theme of the Conference will be *stock-taking*—both of the material resources accessible to us in the various regions of Canada, and of the man-made settings now being fashioned for the folk of this country to live amidst. There is a sharp discrepancy between the promises revealed in our unfolding panorama of economic wealth, and our reckless post-war performances in community building. The challenge facing the Conference will be to seek a way to close the gap between the world our inheritance allows, and the physical environment we are in fact preparing for future generations.

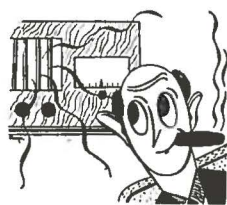
Every page in this bulletin has a bearing on that problem. Contrast the vast governmental commitments now being made for various works (*Planning Briefs*) with the citizens' opinion that we lack public machinery to ensure methodical use of land (*Radio Listeners' Views*). Compare the report of planning powers and attainments of European cities with the citizens' views of what our communities need. Set the economic hopes in regional change (industrialization in B. C., oil finds and soil improvement in the Prairies, opening up the north, immigration, the Seaway, entry of Newfoundland) alongside the visible glumness of streets new-built at your elbow for the inheritors of Canada's riches. What we're getting in new urban quarters is not good enough; and an able professional tells his colleagues (and us on page 6) that to change the planning system must be the task of citizens.

To carry out our task as citizens we must first understand what our 1949 planning system is like. The October Conference can resolve little unless CPAC Members have before them a picture of the apparatus now in use for planning. This apparatus is distinctive in each of the ten Provinces. So we shall suggest to all Divisions of CPAC, beginning this month, a series of questions; they will bear on the process by which ground is made urban, and on the quantity and quality of community-building in the 1940's. The answers to them, pieced together at our Conference, will provide us all with a grasp of the state of planning in Canada—and a starting-point in our collective quest for a way to turn our space and skills to more livable account in the 1950's.

community planning association of canada, ottawa



radio listeners'
views on planning



Last autumn in the Citizens' Forum series the CBC broadcast a lively discussion on the question "Is town planning a pipe dream?" from our Vancouver Branch. A special virtue of this series is that listeners are organized in hundreds of groups across the country, and enjoy facilities to give their own views, as well as to hear others'.

In addition to inviting free discussion, those in charge of the Forum ask specific questions at the end of the study leaflet for each broadcast. (The leaflets are very good in themselves, and we are able through the kindness of the C.A.A.E. to offer a copy of that on town planning to any interested CPAC Member.) We think the answers following this particular discussion offer much food for thought to our readers.

We shall outline the answers in the order in which specific questions were asked; but before doing so, would recall that these are not merely the spot answers of individuals accosted by a pollster of some sort: these are the corporate opinions of exceptionally well-informed neighbours . . . people who are so concerned with public questions that they meet regularly on Friday evenings (in every kind of weather and in spite of the sitter-shortage) to mull over public questions and to write down their own answers. Here is what these people (some actual, many potential Members of CPAC) have to say on town planning in Canada. Here are considered opinions of those who have earned a real right to the proud title of citizens.

Has your Community any Official Body for Planning?

Groups in the major cities said 'yes' except in the Prairies and Maritimes. In B. C. it was said only large places need them; in Nova Scotia only the small places reported—and they said almost unanimously 'no'.

Have you any Organization of Citizens supporting Planning?

This one hit close to home: only one Branch of CPAC was mentioned by all these well-versed citizens (and that the one where the broadcast originated). On the cheerful side, many such organizations were reported without being named; and the interest in planning of voluntary societies having other major aims was frequently referred to.

What could be Improved through Planning?

Larger places nearly all mentioned traffic and parking, but failed to see that these problems are largely by-products of their own urge to become Big Cities. Smaller places were perplexed more by extraneous forces: disruptions caused by railways, through highways and the works of senior governments. Removal of blight, abatement of soot and wastes, and provision of space for leisure were prominent needs. The extravagance in utilities for scattered suburban growth was hardly mentioned—though it's plain to see all across Canada. One group in

West Vancouver saw something less obvious: that their "snooty" zoning, calling for 100% detached single houses, is driving the municipality into bankruptcy.

Should your Community Spend More on Planning?

Almost unanimous answer (remember, these are informed citizens, mostly not Members of CPAC): yes. Nova Scotians added: 'but spend present budgets more wisely first.' Montreal, with the highest planning budget in Canada, has citizens ready to spend much more; this is a tribute to past work and a hint to Councils elsewhere.

Should Property Taxes be the Chief Source of Municipal Funds?

Like bugles in unison, halting a charge, the answer came: no.

What Other Municipal Sources do you Recommend?

Income taxes and death duties appeal to most as equitable; but whether to collect them locally or to claim more of what senior governments collect is a thorny issue. The savings to the community by sound planning of essentials, were seen as a source of funds for desired local extras. Many thought that municipalities should get more of gasoline taxes, since the coming of automobiles lies so near the root of the need to re-plan. Liquor and luxury taxes appealed to some. In Nova Scotia, a special local tax on goods bought by mail from afar was suggested.

This last question led directly (and rightly, we think) to the three cardinal points around which the physical overhaul of Canadian communities must turn:

- A. Each urban centre should consolidate by law its municipal machinery into a single unit, to deal with the entire area that is now, or is likely shortly to become, a continuous urban settlement in fact.
B. Each such strengthened local government should have placed upon it the obligation to make all detailed changes in its public installations by methodical reference to a comprehensive plan—and that overall plan should itself be periodically adjusted to trends of development as they can reasonably be foreseen.
C. The provincial governments have the obligation to give the same study and direction to physical development in all areas where the density of settlement is not sufficient to support strong and technically capable urban government.

five years of post war growth: first questions

As indicated on Page One, the National Citizens' Conference on Planning (Winnipeg, October 6-8) will look closely at the new Canadian scene being fashioned since V-E Day. This will involve measurements and photographs of the emerging environment, as well as a brief review of economic forces and planning machinery that have moulded that environment. The Conference can be the opportunity for us to assess those forces and to suggest improved planning machinery for the years ahead—but only if we begin now to form a realistic picture of the present circumstances, in the area where we live.

So that the local pictures will fit together to form the national one, these pages will in coming months raise a series of questions to be discussed and answered locally. The first questions may appear so elementary that many Members are (and all Members should be) able to answer them off-hand. Yet these questions can provide useful results for CPAC as a whole: (1) contacts between local Member groups and the local public servants who can provide answers from the public planning records; (2) starting-points for broader Branch and Division programs this spring; (3) a composite survey of community planning in Canada such as does not now exist.

The national office therefore puts the questions before all readers of Layout for Living. The answers should be routed as follows—and here's a chance to inform Ottawa without having to:

- A. Where local Branch organized: from Branch Executive to Divisional Secretary (see list).
B. In B.C., Man., Ont., P.Q. and N.S. communities where Branches not yet organized: from individuals to Divisional Secretary.
C. Where provincial Division and Local Branch not yet organized: from individuals direct to CPAC, 56 Lyon Street, Ottawa.

Divisional Secretaries are asked to have most complete available returns mailed to national office by May 15, 1949, for each community reporting answers to the following questions:

- Divisional Secretaries
British Columbia—Mr. J. T. Gawthrop, Department of Trade & Industry, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C.
Manitoba—Mrs. W. J. Shepherd, 331 Borebank Street, Winnipeg, Man.
Ontario—Miss G. Stencil, 1175 Bay Street, Toronto, Ont.
Quebec—M. Roland Drolet, 371 de la Reine, Quebec, P.Q.
Nova Scotia—Mrs. J. P. Dumaresq, 3 1/2 Lucknow Street, Halifax, N.S.

- 1. What is the official name of the local planning agency for your community?
2. Over what area (by map or list of municipalities) does this agency bear responsibility? What population lives in this area?
3. Is the planning agency constituted as an honorary, advisory board, commission or committee? Of how many persons?
4. Does the planning agency retain professional consultants?
5. Is the planning agency served by a salaried staff of its own?
6. What is the total annual budget of the planning agency for the present fiscal year?
7. Has the planning agency published recommendations? Secured municipal adoption of them? Secured Provincial endorsement such as to give certain drawings or schedules prepared by the agency the force of law?

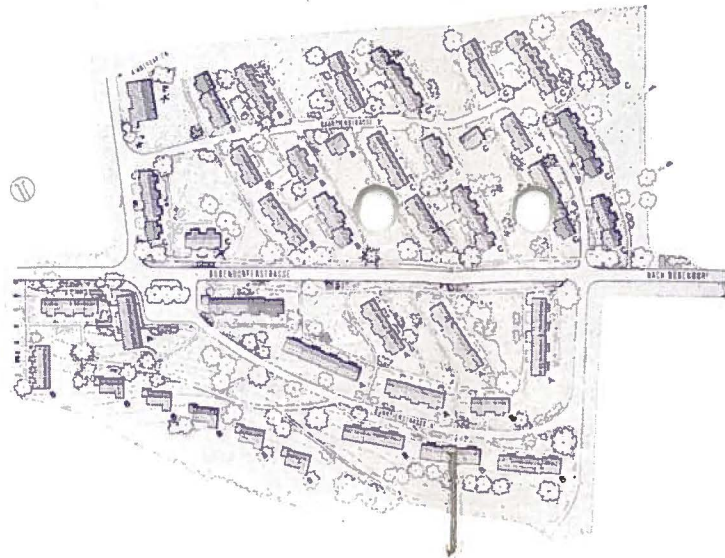
rates for the use of films

Some correspondence indicates the mistaken idea that Branches and other Member groups will incur heavy expense by using films. To dispel this notion, we are printing the current rates of the most likely source: the National Film Society at 172 Wellington St. Ottawa. The term 'service charge' means that the Society is not charging you for the purchase cost of the print (perhaps because somebody like CPAC has made it freely available to the N.F.S.); service charge includes only the bare cost to the Society of keeping the print in good repair, and keeping proper records of its location and use. 'Rental' on the other hand means that the Society includes in the rate a small share of the purchase price of the film you borrow. The service charge or rental is indicated for each film in the Catalog and Supplementary Catalog of 16 mm. films for loan by the Society; the rates are also indicated on the special list of town planning and housing films available from the national office of CPAC. The rates are governed by the number of reels in the film, each reel lasting about ten minutes. The basic rates of the Society at present are (per reel):

Table with 3 columns: Film Type, Service Charge, Rental. Rows include Black & White (Sound/Silent) and Colour (Sound/Silent) with corresponding rates.



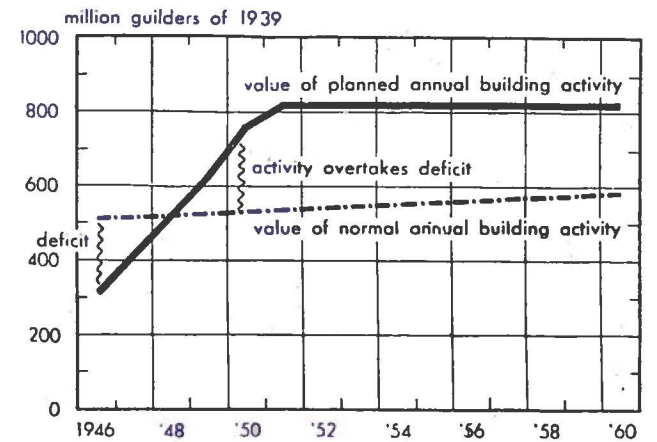




LEFT: Suburban housing at Zurich—not distinguished buildings, but when carefully adjusted to ground forms, to existing trees and to each other, they give a 'pleasing sense of space and beauty'.

RIGHT: Netherlands building program for the 1950's (from *The Way Ahead*) raises the question: what is Canada's program?

BELOW: Model of the South Bank of the Thames below the Tower Bridge, as conceived in 1945 according to the County of London Plan. (UKIO).



## town planning in west europe today by P. R. U. Stratton

These cursory notes are based on a short European tour last summer. Administrative aspects of their planning are given special consideration, because I think administration is one of our biggest planning problems in Canada today. Unless effective means have been devised for securing its execution and continuous revision, the most workable of plans will remain so much waste paper.

I shall refer to only three European countries: Britain, Holland and Switzerland. The Scandinavians are probably the most active in community planning elsewhere in Europe today—this side of the iron curtain, at any rate.

### Switzerland.

In Switzerland, regional planning is already well advanced. The canton (corresponding roughly to our province) prepares the plan after consultation with the municipalities concerned. Once the cantonal plan is ratified, it becomes the statutory plan for the region.

I believe firmly that Switzerland is the planner's paradise. Just to travel through the country is enough to restore one's wilted faith in the possibilities of planning! The people as a whole have an extraordinary natural sense of order, good taste and economy. As a result of this general acceptance of planning, it has been possible to secure the orderly development of their cities in spite of their rapid growth. (Zurich, with a population of 370,000, has in recent years grown nearly as fast as Vancouver.)

The siting and layout of their housing estates is particularly impressive. The great bulk of their low-rental housing is built and administered by private co-operative associations under government supervision. Yet each project is fitted into the framework of the city with due regard to other phases of the plan, and its subdivision is carefully planned before building commences to provide for all the necessary community services. Many housing estates are set in the midst of orchards or farm land which, combined with their admirably kept gardens, impart an extraordinarily pleasing sense of space and beauty to the development. It is hard to conceive of children who grow up in such surroundings becoming juvenile delinquents.

On the other hand, as a result of their compact city development, open country can be reached by street car in a few minutes from the centre of even the largest towns. Traffic congestion is conspicuous by its absence—it is simpler to use public transportation.

Another aspect of European planning is the position of the planner in the City Administration. In Canada and the United States, the Town Planning Commission is the most usual set-up. In Europe this form of administration is almost unknown. In Britain, Holland and Switzerland, the town planner is a city official directly responsible to the City Council. In many cases the City Engineer is also the chief planner, with his own specialist planning staff. Risk of friction between the planning and the engineering functions is eliminated—an important consideration, since the engineer is responsible for carrying out many of the planner's proposals.

In other instances the planner is an independent official who nevertheless works closely with the other City departments. In either case, the planning officer is a senior official reporting directly to a committee of the Council. The planner has therefore much readier access to the municipal administration than has the secretary or director of one of our town planning boards—who reports in the first instance to his Board, on which perhaps only one alderman may sit.

If the Town Planning Commission's plans are adequately presented to Council, our set-up may have the advantages of securing citizen participation, and of removing the burden of detailed study from the shoulders of the City Council. But with a purely advisory Commission (which may or may not be consulted by the Council) one gets the worst of both worlds: possessing no real powers, and having little direct contact with the other City departments, the Commission tends to work in a vacuum, isolated from reality.

### Britain and the Netherlands.

One of the most important recent legislative changes has been the enlargement of the administrative unit for planning purposes in Britain. Hitherto, planning powers have rested largely with the urban and rural district

councils, small units of local government which were quite incapable of doing a real planning job—both because they lacked the funds and the technical staff and because their territory itself was too small for effective planning.

These councils were permitted to form joint advisory committees covering a larger area, but, possessing only advisory functions, they were powerless to get their plans adopted. One witnessed the production of a spate of technically excellent regional plans, beautifully written and illustrated, which never had a hope of reaching fruition.

Britain's 1947 legislation vests planning powers exclusively in the county councils and county borough councils—considerably larger units of administration—and makes the preparation of a plan obligatory on the responsible authorities. It is intended to revise and enlarge the political boundaries of the larger towns, so that the administrative unit will coincide more closely with the actual urban area of the town.

In our own metropolitan areas also, planning administration would be much simplified if their entire area was brought under unified political control; but we obviously cannot delay planning till that day comes. The ready alternative is the metropolitan or regional Authority with statutory planning powers. I say *statutory powers* advisedly, because purely advisory bodies are likely, as in Britain, to prove a snare and a delusion.

We can profit by the mistake which Britain originally made, in confusing the democracy of local government with the anarchy of the small planning unit. Democracy implies the greatest good of the greatest number. While each municipal unit in the area must be given every opportunity to help prepare the plan and to put its own interests forward, some machinery must be provided which will ensure that the plan approved by the majority is finally adopted. This implies the existence of an arbitrator to iron out differences; the arbitrator would logically be the responsible Provincial Minister (who is already given an umpire's responsibility in Ontario's town planning legislation).

The Dutch, whose planning administration is somewhat similar to the British, had up till recently made little progress in regional planning, owing to their difficulty in getting municipalities to act together. However, the fact that the provinces had to approve all municipal plans provided some opportunity for the co-ordination of local plans. But in 1941 the responsibility for preparing regional plans was placed in the hands of the provincial governments and work on regional plans is now proceeding. The Dutch have in fact gone a stage further—and are now engaged in the preparation of a national plan.

### Britain's New Towns.

For a number of years, it had been realized in Britain that a limit must be set to the growth of the larger cities, since the bigger they became, the more uneconomic and uncomfortable they were to live in. Workers had to spend hours getting to and from their place of work, traffic problems were becoming insuperable, and open green spaces were receding further and further from the city.

The only solution was to draw off some of the population from the over-stuffed towns into entirely New Towns, or expanded small towns. But since existing urban authorities could not go far outside their own boundaries without running into a lot of administrative grief, it was decided to set up publicly-owned *development corporations* to plan and construct these New Towns. The New Town will be turned over to a local administration when the community becomes sufficiently mature for self-government.

The central government advances the capital required, to be repaid ultimately from the lease and sale of land.





The land itself is acquired in large blocks by negotiation or compulsory purchase.

The development of New Towns has been rendered much easier by the wide powers now exercised by the Board of Trade. In Britain this is a government department, and directs the location of industry. By limiting the choice of new sites open to a given industry, it is possible to ensure that the needed number of jobs will be available to support the population it is proposed to house in the New Towns. In fact, without such powers it is probably true to say that the New Towns plan could not have been carried out at all.

Owing partly to the difficulty of finding suitable vacant sites at a desirable distance from the cities which require to be "decanted", and partly to the advantage of having a nucleus of community services already available, it has been the practice in the majority of cases to enlarge an existing small town rather than to start an entirely new one. But in every case a definite limit has been set to the ultimate population of the town (usually between 30,000 and 60,000); each town—new or old—is to be surrounded by a permanent green belt of agricultural or park land. A number of New Towns have already been scheduled for development in the neighbourhood of London and other large cities; while considerable opposition has arisen from some inhabitants of existing towns destined for enlargement, the plans are being pushed ahead apace.

From the planner's point of view, the chief interest of these projects lies in the opportunity to plan a whole town literally from the ground up, instead of the usual business of tinkering with an old and very imperfect machine. From our own point of view in Canada, I think the chief lesson is the necessity of checking our excessive urban sprawl while there is yet time. This implies (1) the reservation of green belts around our larger cities through the use of agricultural zones and through the effective control of new subdivisions; and (2) the planned decentralization of industry to adequately serviced sub-centres, duly related to transportation and housing.

I do not propose to discuss Britain's revolutionary legislation governing the right to develop land, since I do not think there is any immediate likelihood of such a measure being adopted in Canada\*. We have been rather less meticulous in our respect for private property rights than the British, and in consequence we can now take fairly drastic planning action without incurring a liability for compensation.

In Britain's case, however, some such action was necessary because the threat of heavy payments for compensation was to a large extent stifling effective planning. It should be pointed out that in spite of its far-reaching extension of government control over land use, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 was in no sense a political one; the legislation was in fact based on the recommendations of experts originally appointed by a (predominantly Conservative government coalition).

\*See Layout for Living No. 16, p. 6.

P. R. U. Stratton, English by birth and Accountant by profession, came to Canada to live in 1930. From 1934 to 1938 he was back in London, and active in establishing the Housing Centre there. On his return to Vancouver he helped found the Vancouver Housing Association in which he continues to play an active part. From 1939 to 1945 he served overseas in Infantry and Intelligence. He is on the Executive of the Greater Vancouver Branch of CPAC, and a member of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission.

## citizens and professionals have separate tasks

by Hugh Pomeroy

Director of Planning for Westchester County in New York, an Active Member of CPAC and a frequent contributor to our Conferences and to these pages. The following we print at some risk—for we've deleted one bit where he said: "If anyone only partially quotes me on this, I'll sue him." He was asking the 1947 meeting of the American Society of Planning Officials "What should the young planner be prepared to give?" Our text is taken from Planning 1947 published by ASPO.



I want to separate the professional responsibilities of the planner as a professional person from the exercise of his rights as a citizen in a democratic political order, through democratic processes. Happy is he who resolves any conflict he may find by an independence of action that is willing to sacrifice security and comfort for the exercise of the right of free expression. Frustrated, at least, is he who sacrifices honesty of expression for a security based on prostitution of intellectual honesty. And downright dishonest is he who undertakes a commitment of his professional service and violates that commitment on the deadly assumption that the end, however noble, justifies such a violation . . .

Clarity of thinking on the part of the young planner calls for a recognition, so complete as to constitute a basis of conduct, of the distinction between planning as a function of government operating within existing governmental procedures, on the one hand, and, on the other, either the general civic promotion of planning or political action directed toward modification or extension of existing policies and procedures. I am profoundly convinced that this distinction is fundamental, and that while planning as a governmental function must be supplemented by civic promotion, or may call for changes in policy on procedure which fall within the realm of political operation, planning itself must be identified, defined, and protected, as such. There must, indeed, be correlation, but integration would be fatal . . .

Planning as a governmental function must operate within existing governmental procedures. Note that I say existing—and by that I mean whatever procedures are in effect at a particular time—for at that time there are no other by which planning can be made effective. Procedures may need changing. The whole history of planning legislation, instrumentalities, and official planning organization is the story of new and changing procedures. But the obtaining of new and revised instrumentalities falls within the realm of strategy, to which the relationship of the planner as such is different than it is to his professional responsibility as a planner. The issue here is both that of clarity of thinking and that of honesty . . .

This is no declaration of the sanctity of what is. Through the years I have always been an explorer in planning—challenging concepts that seemed to impose limitations to clear and logical action. In my chronological youth in planning, I was frowned on by too many moss-grown prophets to make me now content to grow moss myself. Not only our procedures but our objectives and our motivations must advance with the needs, and the aspirations, and the spiritual growth of a great people . . .

Finally, the young planner must know that the surest way to action that will have validity—and results that will be enduring—is through the frequently slow and inefficient, but tremendously effective, process of democratic government. The public discussion and consultation that are necessary in order to gain public acceptance of planning proposals—discussion and consultation that should accompany the formulation of planning objectives and the development of plans, as well as being directed to propagandizing completed plans—will be found to be a two-way process, by which the planner should be enabled better to ascertain specific needs and possibly to sense some of the deeper human longings for a satisfactory environment, longings that can offer some of the surest guides to planning. There is no room for impatience or assumption of superior wisdom in this process . . .

The real danger is not that of infiltration of "radical" ideas into a safe and undefiled intellectual atmosphere. If our ideas are so insecure and so fuzzy that they are vulnerable to vigorous expression, then there is something wrong with our thinking. The real danger is that vigorous, alert, exploratory thinking—by minds geared to the needs of a generation that will be able to greet the year 2000—may lose its edge from discouragement resulting from the failure of accomplishment in planning to keep pace with enthusiasm. There is no alchemy whereby mere fervour can transform the slow machinery of democratic processes into a magic carpet whereon to fly from here to there without having to bother with what lies between. Fervour and enthusiasm can be useful as they are disciplined. Thus can they be geared to drive through to effective results.

## housing canadian families

The following are excerpts from a talk given by the Executive Director over the CBC Trans-Canada network on Tuesday, March 8, in the free opinion series called "Points of View".

Canadians have not been putting together new dwellings adequate for the new families appearing among us. Families have probably outnumbered family spaces, for at least a generation. The most acute problem is focussed in our two dozen major centres: fully 95% of the population growth in one recent year came to roost in and around the larger cities. Besides not building enough, the new dwellings that have been built, have been beyond the means of most of the new families.

Even with the record-breaking effort last year, all we did was to slow down our retreat a bit. The figures can be put this way: for every 300 families in Canada at the beginning of 1948, there were about ten extra families to be housed by Christmas. And since many families were in old buildings, we should have built at least six more dwellings as replacements. For the typical group of 300 families, altogether about 16 new dwellings should have been built; but they weren't. Only about 8 of them were. So we now have more families sharing quarters—and those quarters are more worn out—than a year ago. The same has been true every year for a good long while. Let's not tell ourselves that we'll eventually come out of the woods merely by carrying on as at present.

Hundreds of thousands of Canadian families are deprived of the space that every family requires. An alarmist might call such a situation a famine, demanding community action. And the community has been tossing ever grow-

ing cash contributions into the housing kitty for a dozen years. Federal funds now affect the financing of about one-third of the house-building going on. Many municipalities and some provinces are also contributing—with financial help and subsidized local service installations.

Whatever its contribution, a government has a corresponding obligation to make sure that it's helping to produce the kinds of quarters that all sorts of families really need and can afford . . .

As we determine what family spaces we need, we must find land to lay them out on. To get it, we'll probably have to go out beyond the town limits, because there are no more vacant lots in most growing Canadian towns. The local government will have to see to the new network of pipes, pavements and wires that town families need for their way of life. Only a few of our suburban communities today command the skills and funds called for to transform open fields into good residential areas. The community gets only one chance to lay out each new area; every mistake here can mean an extra burden of inconvenience and taxes almost forever.

The actual building part of the process will also bear public examination. For some reason, most builders of housing do not seem to be able to use the tricks of large-scale organization and mechanization by which costs are cut and efficiency stepped up in so many other fields. Uncertainty of employment, lack of working capital, eleventh-hour purchasing and guess-work, consume undue shares of the cost of nearly all our housing. There are economists who regard the house-building business, for its size and importance, as an antiquated freak—and an expensive one, to boot . . .

We still talk as if every Canadian family can by some miracle come to own a bungalow with Queen Anne trimmings. Other democratic nations that have become nations of townsmen—as we are fast becoming—have had to abandon the private pipe-dreams about housing and town planning that are still widely believed in by Canadians. In almost every country abroad, they have had to set up municipal housing authorities who go out and buy land, and undertake the building of many kinds of rather Spartan row-houses and flats, for rent at cost or less. Some of these dwellings are much more pleasant than I make them sound. At all events they're much better than having young married people staying on for years with their in-laws; and that's what nearly 100,000 young Canadians must do—if they're ever going to be able to make a down payment on that dream cottage.

The picture is not all gloomy: our universities, research council and professional bodies are becoming aware of the ways in which an industrial world can lick the housing problem. It will pay us, both as householders and as taxpayers, to give more attention to what they say about family needs, building methods and the planning of cities. (I can think of no better introduction than a new book called *Houses for Canadians*. It was written by Humphrey Carver who is now in charge of research for Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation; it was published late last year by the University of Toronto Press.)

This lack of decent housing and good community planning is bound to become much more serious, until we come to understand it—and to deal with it—as communities.



# Planning Briefs

Supplement to Layout for Living No. 24, April '49

**VICTORIA**—Many industrial developments for B.C. have been announced by Premier Johnson. Included are ten million dollars worth of work for each of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, a highway program, developments to serve the pulp industry and rural hydro users, a hospital program, a program of educational buildings; and several millions for soil conservation and irrigation projects. The aims are to increase the capacity for secondary industries in the Vancouver area, and to provide better access for new primary industries in the interior of the province. The largest single item in prospect is an aluminum processing plant. The Premier also said he is willing to confer with the Federal Government on housing needs.

**VANCOUVER**—This city faces a large works program extending over several years, and looks for aid from senior governments in carrying it out. The most urgent items are extension of water mains and sewers. Over the next ten years the city also anticipates an expenditure of millions of dollars on road and bridge improvements, schools, libraries and parks.

Downtown business groups oppose the widening of certain streets, and several community associations are discussing the detailed proposals in their areas. Some protest that the City Planning Commission is not free to study the overall effects of the specific decisions required of it. Vancouver's traffic engineer, Kenneth Vaughan-Birch, has been recognized by the National Research Council of the United States for his studies of the *economic aspects of parking*.

Vancouver wants to set up a Housing Authority, and seeks a low-rental housing formula in which both senior governments will share. In Fraserview, where the federal government is building 1,100 houses for veterans, the misunderstanding with former property owners seems settled. The city is also proceeding, with provincial and federal co-operation, on a housing project for the aged.

**EDMONTON**—Alberta Chambers of Commerce are pressing the provincial government to extend roads into the Peace River area. Meanwhile roads are being built into the eastern Rockies to provide access and protection to the forests there. In Edmonton itself there is discussion of the proper locations for federal and provincial as well as municipal buildings.

City Council faces large expenditures for pavement and utility extensions. Its application for wider expropriation powers is opposed by the Chamber of Commerce. A new eight-million dollar hotel, and a four-million dollar extension to the Macdonald, are going ahead. New industries continue to be established here. All electric wiring is being put underground in the streets of the central area. Off-street parking is being promoted and an important report has been received on the improvement of the Edmonton transit system.

Some 2,000 families are expected to ask the city's help in finding accommodation this year; the city is cool to the terms under which Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation will build 500 veterans' houses. The President of the National House Builders' Association urged a dominion-provincial conference on housing problems. Many private home-building projects are going ahead, and while the population has increased about 40% in ten years, the number of home owners has more than doubled in the same time. The city is in the midst of a twelve-million dollar school building program, comprising a composite high school and eleven elementary schools. A civic auditorium, the restoration of historic Fort Edmonton, and the extension of the Arena to seat a total of 8,000 persons are also in prospect.

**SASKATOON**—The Building Research Division of the National Research Council has established a regional station on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan—partly in recognition of work already done by the University on soils, concrete and water vapour problems in building. The new station will be able to test building segments indoors and out, under a wide range of temperature and humidity conditions. These tests are related to those under way by the N.R.C. in Ottawa; and the program may pave the way for similar co-operation in building research with other schools of engineering and architecture. Regional stations in the Maritimes, B.C. and the far north are also contemplated.

**WINNIPEG**—The proper relationship between the revenues of municipal and provincial governments is a live topic here. Municipal leaders say they cannot raise more funds than in the past, yet are unable to meet their immediate expenses. Meanwhile, senior governments put forward excellent reasons for retaining the surpluses accumulated in recent years.

Provincial agricultural officials urge reversion to grass and live-stock farming in order to conserve the vitality of much overworked Manitoba soil. Education Minister C. Rhodes Smith says his department will encourage those rural municipalities who wish to establish larger school areas.

The City of Winnipeg's program of local improvements covers utilities, hospital and municipal buildings. The Metropolitan Plan recommends a number of major works but does not indicate priorities among them; this has given rise to considerable debate on new bridge construction and traffic improvements. The new zoning by-law would require (among other things) that various types of building be accompanied by stated amounts of off-street parking space. No municipality in the metropolitan area seems anxious to adopt these provisions until it is sure that all will do likewise.

Provincial government is being urged to establish a permanent housing agency, to measure needs and to smooth the path for federal-municipal co-operation in meeting them. A house-builders' exhibition will take place in Winnipeg the last week in April. A full survey of housing conditions in the city is sought as a result of the reports of health officers. To tackle the housing problem, said Chicago architect Chermayeff here, we must first decide "whether we want shelter or monuments."

**PORT ARTHUR**—The city is asking the federal government for aid in re-development of the waterfront which will cost in the neighbourhood of \$500,000.

**WINDSOR**—With a registered shortage of almost 4,000 dwelling units, divided almost equally between veterans and non-veterans, this city contemplates the establishment of municipal housing authority. Meanwhile negotiations with the federal government for additional veterans' housing are continuing.

**LONDON**—A co-operative housing group has submitted a plan of sub-division for 106 acres of land near here; if it is approved they intend to form a construction company to undertake directly the development of the land and the building of 100 houses. Recognizing that suburban development presents the planning opportunities and headaches at present, the Southwestern Ontario Planning Conference gave particular study to those problems. The Conference was the second annual meeting of its kind and received carefully studied reports and papers from distinguished visiting speakers. Failure to produce orderly growth in suburban areas, or even elementary standards of construction, was admitted.

**NIAGARA FALLS**—The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada in annual assembly here recognized that housing will continue to be the No. 1 problem for many years ahead. Architects foresaw the solution coming from fuller surveys of need, better choice and layout of sites, and in wider ranges but simpler detailing of individual building types. They saw town planning as the best assurance that residential areas would not deteriorate as fast as they could be built.

**GALT**—This city is seeking to extend its territory and services in order to provide space for needed additional housing for rental.

**TORONTO**—Expansion continues in central Canada. While the national birth rate has passed its peak, there are still five babies born for every three born in the same length of time a dozen years ago; of 125,000 immigrants to this country in 1948 well over half settled in Ontario. Much of this expansion takes place in urban centres, and the provincial budget for 1949 contains many forms of aid to municipalities in meeting their responsibilities.

While houses have been built at record rate, the supply is still not tailored to the need. Visits of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Reconstruction have left the clear impression that, if whole metropolitan areas can come forward with concrete schemes to meet their housing needs, the federal government may be prepared to go some way to help. The province could well serve as umpire in establishing metropolitan needs. The Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada and the new president of the Toronto Real Estate Board, have joined the chorus of those demanding a more adequate supply of serviced suburban land for residential building. Toronto University's School of Architecture proposes a summer session in Planning for Municipal Engineers.



The Civic Advisory Committee is studying metropolitan land use problems, yet some press for the absorption of suburban municipalities within the city limits. A half dozen detailed proposals for street improvement have come forward from various sources, and none has been adopted. The Toronto Transportation Commission is this month calling for tenders on the first installment on its subway building program; the group of CPAC members in Oriole Park are continuing their interest in the city's development. The Ontario Division of CPAC intends a planning Area Conference on the problems of York County, to be held shortly.

OTTAWA—With employment in the cities and towns of Canada at a higher level than ever before in peacetime, the Minister of Reconstruction has described plans for keeping it high: public works, which can over the long term be adjusted in volume and a shelf of "low-rent housing projects, slum clearance and community planning". (There was no attempt to explain how planning in the future can be effective for communities being rapidly built up right now.) Authentic information on the resources and economy of Canada are to be provided in a new National Atlas. Experts have met to prepare more compact, flexible and up-to-date editions of the National Building Code.

The Prime Minister has said we all welcome the economic activity, immigration and high marriage rates which intensify the housing shortage more rapidly than dwellings are built. While seeing no prospect of a federal-provincial-municipal conference on housing, the government will receive concrete proposals from specific areas. New regulations are in force to protect veterans buying under the Integrated Housing Plan.

Jacques Greber has been retained for a further year on the planning of the national capital; while background information on the planning is now appearing, in films and brochures, few specific details will be published until the Cabinet can study the proposals.

The Appeal Court of Ontario has settled a test case involving the Planning and Development Act: after the Municipal Board had approved the annexation of part of Carleton County into the City of Ottawa, the County objected that the Board was not competent to do so, inasmuch as proposals for co-operative planning of the area were already before the Minister of Planning. The Court dismissed the County's objection; and the City is annexing a rather smaller area than was originally sought. It is expected that Ottawa and Hull will both annex further territories in order to secure consistency in design of utilities and location of new developments within the whole capital area. Government spokesmen have let it be known that they expect greater harmony among the local administrations, so that the best possible results can be obtained from anticipated heavy federal investment in the area.

MONTREAL—The Metropolitan Commission of Montreal seeks an extension of its charter powers so that it can also operate as a metropolitan transit authority for Montreal Island. The Metropolitan Commission's request has not been warmly received by the provincial government. The chairman of the city's Executive Committee has presented a report on the *Mass Transportation Problem in Montreal*. The report outlines the mass transit systems in use in London, Paris, American and Canadian cities, and concludes with specific recommendations for Greater Montreal.

About one-tenth of the houses built in Canada last year were built on Montreal Island; this is proportionately less than Montreal should have built; the main reason may have been the diversion of labour and materials for industrial and commercial work. The Junior Chamber of Commerce has held a discussion clinic on housing, in which the virtues of home ownership were especially urged. City Planning Director Cousineau, whose department is proceeding with zoning by-laws for the city, has been elected Vice President of the Institute of Professional Town Planners.

McGill School of Architecture will conduct a course this summer for municipal officers in Zoning.

QUEBEC—Spokesmen on every side have endorsed the new metropolitan planning authority for the Quebec City area. Traffic and parking in the central area, and new subdivisions in outlying parts are especially in need of better direction. A body of property owners have asked for greater freedom in the location of multiple family dwellings when zoning by-laws are being drafted. A larger technical staff of planners is wanted by the Quebec City Branch of CPAC, which is also turning attention to the possibility of incorporating community planning in school and university studies.

MONCTON—This city's new planning board is proceeding with the drafting of maps showing in detail the way in which the city's land is now being used. In many Maritime cities the greater part of the new built-up areas consist of housing constructed with federal aid.

SAINT JOHN—Tenants are now moving into the first of over 200 rental dwellings being built here with federal aid. The cities of this province are also finding themselves far short of the land and money they need to provide living places for their citizens.

CHARLOTTETOWN—Prince Edward Island's legislature is expected in this session to lay down plans affecting the use of agricultural land, and for rural electrification. The planner's views appear to be overlooked in the siting of a new federal building.

HALIFAX—There is growing interest here in planning problems facing county and municipal governments, and the Halifax Branch of CPAC has much to do with this interest. Maritimers are learning that the permanent effect of the second world war was to accentuate the concentration of economic activity in central Canada. At the same time the Halifax area is experiencing normal growth and the general complaint: starvation of funds and vacant land with which to meet that growth. There is unrelenting pressure to find new residential areas, and to service them with the sanitary, educational and recreational facilities they will need. The 200-year old city finds its older streets congested, and new ones very expensive to build and maintain. The easing of inter-city traffic, and of central area parking, are receiving special study.

The city educational authorities face the necessity to double the number of schoolrooms in existence. The County Planning Board has published a set of suggestions for prospective buyers of vacant house lots. The Board continues to demand of provincial authorities some guidance in standards of pavement width and sidewalk provision for new roads being opened up.

The city is talking of the establishment of a full-scale housing authority, competent to deal with major slum clearance and development in the area. The most material housing projects are those involving dwellings for army, navy and air-force personnel. It has been suggested that on the terrain of Halifax, multiple dwellings are often more appropriate than detached houses.

ST. JOHN'S—There is great interest here in the way in which the execution of current housing projects in Newfoundland will be affected by the Confederation with Canada.

WASHINGTON—The housing bill now before the U.S. Senate provides for generous loans to local governments in order that they can purchase and clear slum areas for redevelopment under leasehold or after re-purchase by private corporations. The National Security Resources Board reports that they have secured considerable co-operation from American industry in the dispersal of strategic facilities across the continent, and particularly in communities of less than 50,000.

LONDON—The completion of re-housing for some 3¼ million Britons since the war was announced. The government now looks forward to the housing of middle income groups, and to immediate action on major slum clearance. Work has begun on the South Bank of the Thames, site for the Festival of Britain in 1951; the plans include the building of an entire demonstration neighbourhood.

MARSEILLE—Construction is almost complete of a very fully-equipped apartment building designed by Le Corbusier. The building is 17 storeys high and will contain 350 apartments; a new system of prefabricated components is employed in the construction. The entire building is raised on stilts, so that there is free movement under it. The structure encloses complete community shopping and recreation centres. The architect regards it as the type of urban living unit suitable for the future.

WARSAW—John Gunther, American correspondent, reports that the Poles are rebuilding their capital with extraordinary energy. He says they are far ahead of the inhabitants of many other devastated European cities, having cleared away the rubble, and rebuilt those structures capable of restoration. They are now engaged in the construction of wholly new elements, in accordance with a city plan which was developed in outline before the war.

TEL AVIV—This city faces problems familiar to many North American towns, for in 40 years it has grown nearly 600 times. Yet the majority of structures are far more permanent than those found in the familiar boom town; and all permanent structures are located in accordance with a plan of development. It is regarded by its inhabitants as a demonstration of what could be done in the country as a whole.

MOSCOW—The Russian government said recently that the 1935 plan for the city of Moscow had in all basic aspects come to a stage approaching completion. The Council of Ministers said that a new plan covering the next 20 or 25 years of reconstruction and development is to be ready by next October 1st.



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